

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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R 281506Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1376
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 4115

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PINR, PBOR, HO, NU
SUBJ: HONDURAN REACTION TO NICARAGUAN EVENTS

REF: (A) TEGUCIGALPA 3995, (B) TEGUCIGALPA 4105

1. NICARAGUAN EVENTS RECEIVED WIDESPREAD RADIO AND PRESS ATTENTION IN HONDURAS, OBSCURING SOMEWHAT THE COVERAGE GIVEN TO THE VISIT OF MEDIATOR DR. BUSTAMANTE Y RIVERO. BOTH RADIO AMERICA AND HRN, TEGUCIGALPA'S PRIMARY NEWS STATIONS, DEVOTED PRACTICALLY ALL BROADCASTING ON AUGUST 23 TO STORY. OTHERS DID NOT INTERRUPT NORMAL PROGRAMS. PRESS ON AUGUST 25 DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE SPACE TO PHOTOS AND FOLLOW-ON ARTICLES.

2. FEDERATION OF HONDURAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ISSUED NOT UNEXPECTED DECLARATION PRAISING FSLN VICTORY. REFORMIST DAILY "TIEMPO" USED OPPORTUNITY (FOR DOMESTIC PURPOSES) TO REMIND READERS THAT ONLY POPULARLY ELECTED GOVERNMENTS ARE STABLE. "TIEMPO" ALSO TOOK UNITED STATES TO TASK FOR, IT ALLEGED,*8)3 -
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SENED HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS AND PRESSURE FOR SOMOZA'S DEPARTURE BECAUSE OF CONCERN THAT THEHYOST RADICAL ELEMENTS IN FSLN WILL DOMINATE SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT.

3. GOVERNMENT PRESS SECRETARY GERMAN ALLAN PADGETT SAID THAT "CENTRAL AMERICAN MARXISM" WAS A DANGER FOR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN ALL COUNTRIES, AND HIS STATEMENT IMPLIED CUBAN INVOLVE-

MENT. HOWEVER, HE ALSO REITERATED GOH POLICY OF NON-INTERVENTION.

4. COMMENT: WHATEVER THE INFLUENCE OF THESE VENTS ON SOMOZA'S REGIME, THE CONCERNS OF THE GOH (READ ARMED FORCES SUPERIOR COUNCIL) OVER GROWING REGIONAL INSTABILITY (REF A) CAN ONLY BE INCREASED. SOMOZA, AND THE SOMOZA DYNASTY, LOOM LARGER IN THE PUBLIC MIND THAN MIGHT OTHERWISE BE THE CASE, BOTH BECAUSE OF GEOGRAPHICAL PROXIMITY AND THE LONG HISTORY OF HONDURAN/SOMOZA RELATIONS. THOSE RELATIONS HAVE VARIED FROM TENSION OVER BORDER DISPUTES TO VERY CLOSE, AS UNDER OSWALDO LOPEZ ARELLANO. AT ALL TIMES, HOWEVER, THE HONDURAN PUBLIC HAS BEEN AWARE OF THE SOMOZA INFLUENCE IN HONDURAN AFFAIRS. SOMOZA GENERATES VERY LITTLE SYMPATHY AMONG POLITICALLY DISSENTING HONDURANS INCLUDING NOT ONLY STUDENTS, BUT ALSO PRESS, LABOR UNION LEADERS, POLITICIANS, AND BUSINESSMEN. AS MEDIA TREATMENT (REF B) HAS SHOWN THIS. AS "TIEMPO" NOTED, SOMOZA IS NO LONGER A BASTION AGAINST COMMUNISM. THE PRESUMED SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT IS OF MORE INTEREST, WITH REACTIONS TO ITS POSSIBLE COMPOSITION VARYING DEPENDING UPON POLITICAL OUTLOOK, BUT WILL CONCERN, ESPECIALLY WITHIN THE SUPERIOR COUNCIL, OVER THE POTENTIAL FOR A COMMUNIST NICARAGUA. SUCH CONCERN DOES NOT HOWEVER TRANSLATE INTO SUPPORT FOR SOMOZA AMONG HONDURAN PUBLIC.

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